

Reverend Edward Earl Young
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File # - Citizen Comment
Submitted
000211
7/24/2000 by
Earl Young

May 16, 2000

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Reverend Edward Earl Young and I wanted to make you aware of an official complaint that I have filed against an officer in the Gainesville Police Department. The words that follow are an exact copy of my complaint as submitted on the Police Administrative Investigation Referral Form:

I am filing a complaint against Officer Maria Lopez. On Thursday, April 6, 2000, Officer Lopez was the first officer to respond to a disturbance at my place of business, The Clean Cut Barber Shop. I had called the police to come and assist me in handling two young ladies who were not behaving appropriately in my place of business. The situation before Officer Lopez arrived was as follows:

My shop was full of customers and the two young ladies in question were waiting inside the shop. Since the shop was full, they were sharing the same seat. Unbeknownst to me, the young women began to rub and feel one another's legs and crotch areas. My son, who works with me, brought their behavior to my attention and I immediately asked them to separate themselves. The young ladies got up and left the interior of the shop but stopped in the foyer area just before getting outside. They continued to feel on one another and started open-mouthed kissing, showing tongues and all. Their behavior was going from bad to worse and I went to the door and asked them to take it down the road. They told me that I do not tell them what to do, told me not to put my hands on them, and told me that I could not push them around. I told them that I did not want to touch them and I never laid a finger on them. I simply asked them to leave my shop and take that kind of behavior down the street. One of the young women proceeded to tell me that she eats her friend's pussy, she'll eat my mama's pussy and any other woman's pussy for that matter. After her display of vulgarity, I called them bulldaggers and told them again to take that kind of behavior down the street.

The young women did finally go outside but they continued shouting obscenities at me. One of them even picked up a stick and threw it at me. I managed to dodge the stick and I ran up to her and told her that I was not afraid of her. She was a rough looking young woman and she was joined by a few friends of hers. They all looked like a bad group of young people and they were beginning to get a little rowdy. Her friends were taking off their shirts, as if they were getting ready to fight. A few of my patrons came out of the barbershop and held me back from the young women. I asked the young ladies and their friends to get off my premises and I went inside my shop and called the police.

Officer Lopez responded to the call. At that time, the girls had walked away and were almost to the corner. Officer Lopez went up to them and brought them back to the barbershop area. At that point, I came out of the shop and pointed to the young ladies and their friends and asked Officer Lopez to issue them all trespass warnings. She had already heard some of what had happened from the young women and she was already against me. In a snide tone of voice, Officer Lopez told me, "I cannot tell them what to do, their behavior is their problem, and that they have rights".

I proceeded to tell Officer Lopez, that as a tax-paying business owner, I also have rights, and when they bring that kind of behavior into my shop then they have made it my business. This did not seem to faze her. She went around the side of the building and started talking to the young ladies and their friends. I

could hear them laughing and giggling like old friends. Instead of questioning, eyewitnesses in the barbershop and adjoining beauty salon, Officer Lopez was making friends with the instigators of the situation. After this very chummy conversation, Officer Lopez came back and said she was charging me with a hate crime. She said that "my calling them bulldaggers was just as bad as calling me nigger."

Needless to say, I was hot. This officer, who had not even done a thorough investigation, was charging me. I could not believe it and that is a part of the reason that I am filing this complaint. I did absolutely nothing wrong. Acting as a good citizen and business-owner, I called the police to help with a situation that was ugly and could easily have gotten out of hand. Instead of coming to my aid, to investigate in my behalf, Officer Lopez did the following:

1. She took sides with the instigators of the incident. Possibly showing bias because of her own inclinations for that lifestyle.
2. She only took statements from the instigators and their friends.
3. She charged me, the victim in this incident, with a hate crime.
4. In a backhanded manner, she called me a nigger.

In addition to doing the above, Officer Lopez **did not do** the following:

1. She did not protect me or my interests as the victim and the tax-paying business owner who is an upstanding member of the community.
2. She did not get statements from any of the patrons who were in the barbershop and the beauty salon.
3. She did not issue the trespass warnings that I asked her to issue.

In essence, Officer Lopez turned the entire situation around. She made me, the innocent one, guilty and she made them, the guilty ones, innocent. This ought not to be so and I will not let it be so. As far as I am concerned, this case is not closed. Your investigation was not complete and should be reopened. Officer Lopez seriously mishandled this call and something needs to be done about that.

I have had dealings with the Gainesville Police Department before and this is the second time that I have been falsely charged. Something needs to change. I will be awaiting your response to see if it does.

Sincerely,

Reverend Edward Earl Young
Pastor, Peace Temple Church of God in Christ
Proprietor, Clean Cut Barber Shop

I am making you aware of this complaint because the Gainesville Police Department did not handle it properly the first time. They may or may not reopen the case and just in case they do not, I am preparing the way for further action. For me, the case is not closed and will not be closed until a thorough investigation is done. I have been through this before and am willing to go as far as necessary to see that justice is served.

Sincerely,



Reverend Edward Earl Young
Pastor, Peace Temple Church of God in Christ
Proprietor, Clean Cut Barber Shop

COPIES OF LETTER FORWARDED TO:

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